Think-Pair-Share

Listening and Speaking | All Levels

**Description**

*Think-Pair-Share* is designed to have students think about a topic, then pair with another student and share their thoughts. It allows students time to formulate their thoughts and involves all students, not just the few who volunteer or whom the teacher calls on. *Think-Pair-Share* works well in all classes and can be adapted for all levels, beginners to college level. It can easily be implemented in large classes.

Beginning and low-intermediate level English language learners may need to learn and practice the communication skills associated with sharing ideas. These may include language associated with expressing opinions (“I think …,” “in my opinion…”) and sharing ideas (“What is your opinion?” “What do you think?” or simply “How about you?”). If pairs report out their ideas, they may need the language needed to speak for a team (“We think …” or “I think...., but my partner … thinks...). Students may also need to learn the language used to agree or disagree.

**Purpose**

*Think-Pair-Share* allows students to think about a response before sharing them with another student or the class. Students are often more willing to share an idea with a partner than speaking up in the class. This strategy allows them to try out their ideas in, one hopes, a supportive dialog with a partner. Thinking and talking about an idea also helps students sharpen their ideas as they listen to others. If students are asked to report out to the whole class, more confident students get a chance to volunteer the answer for their pair, while less confident students still hear their ideas presented.

**What to Do**

1. Think about how you want to pair up students, either informally, or by pre-assigning pairs within or across proficiency levels. You can also organize the class by numbering students 1 to 4 and asking 1s and 2s and 3s and 4s to work together across tables.
2. Introduce your prompt -- a picture, a situation, a problem, a reading or a PowerPoint -- that you present orally and ask students to respond. Be sure to ask questions that require some thinking and where students are likely to diverge in their answers.
3. Ask students to work individually first, thinking about the answer. Students may write down their answer, but shouldn’t always be required to do so.
4. Announce partners and ask students to pair up and share their ideas. Remind students of the social language that makes team work go more smoothly.
5. Finally, call on pairs to share their ideas with the entire class. To help ensure that students listen, ask other students to repeat what’s been said and ask if they agree or disagree or would like to add some of their ideas.

**Keep in Mind**

You may want to Introduce the strategy by using a prompt that all students can understand, such as showing a picture or painting that can be interpreted in different ways and ask, “What do you see?” Model the strategy with some of the more proficient students. Introduce the social language that is part of pair or team work (What about you? What do you think?)

It is important to allow for sufficient “think time” before asking students to pair up.

**Resources**

**Websites Featuring this Strategy**

Think-Pair-Share featured as part of a set of instructional strategies from a Canadian Site

<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/think/>

**Think-Pair-Share as part of Cooperative Learning. This site includes examples**

<http://www97.intel.com/en/ProjectDesign/InstructionalStrategies/CooperativeLearning/Think_Pair_Share.htm>

**On-Line Lesson Plans and Ideas**

This Lesson Plan from Read-Write-Think uses “Notable Inventions” as the context for a Think-Pair-Share Activity. Although the lesson is designed for younger kids, it gets the point across and can be adapted for different topics and age levels.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson319/tps.pdf>

This Lesson Plan from Journey North, explains how Think-Pair-Share can be used for Vocabulary Development.

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/InstrucStrat36.html>

Here are some math tasks for which Think-Pair-Share might work very nicely. Since some of these are quite involved, there needs to be sufficient time available for students to think about the problem and get started on the analysis

<http://illuminations.nctm.org/Lessons/Makeshift/Makeshift-AS-TaskCards.pdf>

**Youth Literacy Materials**

* PowerPoints accompanying the materials can be starting points focused on Think-Pair-Share used to get students thinking and talking about a topic.
* Paintings and photographs offer opportunities for students to discuss and interpret art.
* Titles such as “I am, therefore I Buy” can create a jumping off point for various predictions as to the content of the piece.
* Songs and Poems by popular artists such as Tupac Shakur can be used to have students think about and share their reactions to a poem, opening the door for a discussion on multiple perspectives on art.

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